

SCOMM

#29:6

FILE
Fisheries

January 28, 1981

Blake W. Kinnear
P.O. Box 2743
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This letter has been provoked by the need to document my gear conflict with the Polish trawl fleet that operated in Alaskan waters near Chirikof Island in the fall and early winter of the preceding two years. They have huge ocean going factories, targeting on cod and pollock, but are capable of catching anything. I run a 96', nine year old, American built and expensively remodeled combination boat.

My favorite king crab grounds are also very rich in various types of groundfish. In 1979 the Polish fleet discovered this and moved into the area in force. Heavy tidal currents commonly hold my crab marker bouys under water at least 40% of the time. The polish fleet is not equipped with lights, even if the bouys had been on the surface. My gear was soon in disarray, out of position and 16 pots missing. After frantic appeal to the Coast Guard and other government agencies, it became clear that nothing could be done until 1980. I had to abandon the grounds, and my season was totally ruined.

This past fall I thought things would be straightened out. After all, a years time should be enough. But, as I was setting my gear, the Polish trawler Carnela steamed right across my bow. He wouldn't answer my radio calls on various channels, but only sounded his horn. He expected my to get out of his way! I bluffed him into turning around and defended my gear. It was only temporarily successful, since I was soon missing five more pots. The Coast Guard to whom I appealed for help, informed me that the Polish have a perfect right to fish in the area, and that I was wrong to have maneuvered with them in defense of my gear!

The media picked up this story, I made contact with my representatives and received support from local government, and this community. The Polish government requested their own trawlers to leave, which they did. Because of this voluntary action, I

was able to salvage a good season. But they, or others will be back next year unless we can work out the red tape in time. Meanwhile...I am supposed to get compensation for some \$16,000.00 worth of gear lost in the past two years by applying to some "appropriate fund," with proper documentation (photos if possible)..

Now, let me digress. I don't represent any powerful special interest groups. I don't have money to donate to political causes. I am trying to establish my family in a time of economic stress and uncertainty. My 12 week old daughter, Emileigh, is a second generation Alaskan. All I've ever wanted to do is to make my living fishing. I'd fish for anything that would make a good pay load. If I can live my life without interference, I'll do alright and still pay gruelling taxes, I've proved that for some years now.

There IS interference and there are obstacles that I don't seem to have control of. My home waters have never been more than a bargaining chip in the State Department's world view. I have two degrees from the University of Washington, in Marine Oceanography and Zoology. I will say right now that the administration of these waters by my government has never been undertaken with a view to utilizing the resources as an interrelated system. This must be done. We must use this valuable asset, and incredibly rich waters, wisely in the decades ahead. The King Crab fishery is the only bright spot for management, so far, and that is only a single species program. Their success depends on local management, and a fair degree of cooperation between certain persons in the program and the skippers of the fleet. Now there is an attempt by interests who have come here to fish from other states to undermine even that one successful program by transferring the control to faceless federal bureaucrats. Yes, I am full of digressions.

The point is that valuable resources are harvested in a basically unsupervised manner by large fleets of foreigners, including the Polish. We Alaskan fishermen are subject to the most stringent limits on our fishing. Management has the right to tell us to stop any time, frequently on a matter of a few hours notice. Contrasting with this, it has taken two full years to even close certain grounds, at certain times, to avoid gear conflicts during crab season. And, this matter is not settled yet.

Meanwhile, fish are harvested by these large fleets and actually sold on the American market, in many cases, with all the profit going to other countries. They have no thought for tomorrow, do not care if they overfish species, and are known to commit offenses at every opportunity. Yet, they fish mostly without American observers aboard.

I believe they have badly damaged certain stocks of fish and begun a series of oscillations in our ecosystem, that may permanently destroy its productivity if the trend is not soon reversed. I would be a better person to harvest these stocks. I would have a care for this land and its resources that these Polish, Japanese or Russians can never have. They laugh at us as they rape our waters and sell the fish on a vast international market, including our own country. Another decade and they will have ruined the grounds and moved on heedlessly.

You may have thought the 200 mile limit makes it possible for me to get a share of this quota? Not really. Our markets are flooded with a cheap product, the international fish companies will not give way to make room for us. Initially, our small boats can not compete with the more efficient factory ships, subsidized by governments to turn out a mass product at minimum prices. We need to turn out a different, higher quality product more individually oriented. But, we must create the demand for our product by taking control of our own resources first. That would strengthen our position enough to get started. Joint ventures with large foreign companies are an option that forces us into their price structures, our relative inefficiency becomes manifest, and they bargain for rights to catch the fish themselves.

The offshore oil and gas leasing program creates further interference. The plan is to develop large offshore tracts, right on the fishing grounds, including Shelikof Straits, which is a prime influence on the productivity of the whole system. The government tried last year to push through leases on the east side of Kodiak. I read the impact statement, which convinced me that bureaucrats are willing to trade my livelihood for 25 years of limited hydrocarbon development. Their best estimate is that at least one major spill projected would cause about 10% reduction in resource levels. I totally disagree, and furthermore state that it wasn't a scientific study at all. They gave no explanation of how they arrived at such a convenient

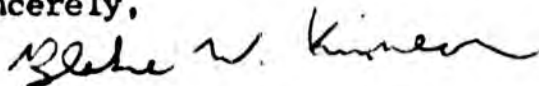
low and uniform reduction in harvest levels of all species. They resorted to political arguments, saying, that the U.S. needs this program to be self sufficient in energy and any delays would hurt our country. Meanwhile, they have locked up vast tracts of onshore reserves that could be drilled and tapped safely with present technology. That was to satisfy the "environmentalists." I say, drill safely above all. Go for the land now, and wait for the offshore drilling until ways have been developed to cope with constant storms, and heavy tidal current. Shelikof Straits has some of the worst sea conditions in the state. This is what would make sense, and preserve the food resource too. But I digress.

This letter is to answer requests for documentation of my claims. The Poles ruined my fishing season last year by driving me off the grounds and costing me invaluable fishing time as well as crab pots. I would have to disclose my secret fishing spots, make them public knowledge, in order to provide the logbook documentation of my gear loss. I am not willing to do that. I resent the fact that my legitimate claims for pots lost in gear conflicts will not be met. Yet, my tax money went to pay for thousands of pots lost by our fleet in the Bering Sea last year because of natural ice conditions.

I won't be a party to such games and I won't give out logbook information. If this is not documentation enough to help keep the Polish out of our resources, then I guess I am just out of luck. I'd like to catch and market the fish at a fair price. The important thing is to keep control of our waters and their productivity. Crab pots are only secondary.

The foreign fishermen have the full support of their respective countries. If I can't get some kind of minimal help for my problems from my own government, I'd at least like to know why. This situation doesn't make sense to me. and I feel the least my country owes me is an explanation.

Sincerely,



Blake W. Kinnear
Skipper F/V Lin-J

May 7, 1981

Mr. Nick Szabo, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries
P.O. Box 1633
Kodiak, AK 99615

Dear Mr. Szabo:

Thank you for your letter and enclosures relative to the high seas interception of western Alaska chinook salmon. As you know, this has been of great concern to the Governor and members of his Administration. Our concerns have been voiced in strong terms both to members of Japan's Fishery Agency and fishing industry and to our Congressional delegation.

The Governor only introduces resolutions in very rare and specific cases as resolutions are generally considered to be the prerogative of the Legislature. Thus, I will be pleased to provide copies of your proposed resolution to members of both bodies of the Legislature with the hope that a member will introduce such.

Should you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Keith W. Specking
Legislative Assistant
to the Governor

cc: Commissioner Skoog, Department of Fish and Game
bcc: Senator Richard Eliason
Senator Bob Mulcahy
Senator Bettye Fahrenkamp
Representative Terry Gardiner
Representative Fred Zharoff
Representative Tony Vaska
w/resolution and backup

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

REGARDING HIGH SEAS INTERCEPTION OF
WESTERN ALASKA CHINOOK SALMON

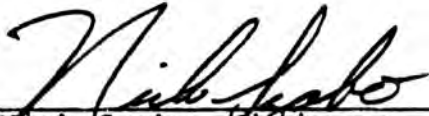
- WHEREAS, the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 reserves to United States fishermen all of the harvestable surplus of fisheries resources when the surplus can be taken by domestic fishermen; and
- WHEREAS, the existing domestic fisheries have the capacity to harvest all potential chinook salmon stocks of Alaskan origin; and
- WHEREAS, the commercial and subsistence fishermen of Western Alaska are dependent on chinook salmon resources as one of the mainstays of their economy and livelihood; and
- WHEREAS, chinook salmon stocks in Alaska are also of primary importance to the expanding recreational fisheries of Western Alaska; and
- WHEREAS, the estimated foreign interception of Western Alaska chinook by the Japanese mothership salmon and Bering Sea trawl fisheries for 1980 is 500,000 fish; and
- WHEREAS, the unreported high sea gillnet dropout may add substantially to the documented interception of Western Alaska chinook salmon; and
- WHEREAS, impact on Gulf of Alaska chinook stocks by Gulf of Alaska trawl and Japanese landbased gillnet catches are unknown; and
- WHEREAS, interceptions of this magnitude on mixed stocks of immature salmon on the high seas adversely impacts the State's ability to assure the conservation and sustained yield of these stocks; and
- WHEREAS, chinook salmon harvests by foreign fisheries on the high seas are still unacceptably high despite regulations of the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission and measures enacted under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976; and
- WHEREAS, it is imperative that the cumulative effect of these interceptions be understood and reduced or eliminated insofar as possible; and

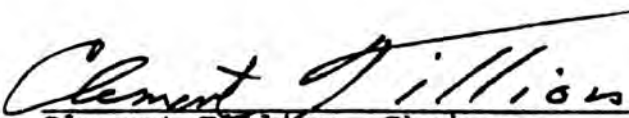
WHEREAS, jurisdiction for management of these fisheries is shared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission, and the State of Alaska;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all parties take appropriate management measures to mandate the reduction of Alaskan chinook salmon interceptions by all foreign offshore fisheries to acceptable levels.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the parties to this resolution request that the Japanese government and fishing industry develop and apply appropriate modifications to their high seas salmon fishing operations that result in significant reductions in their interceptions of Alaska chinook salmon.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federal Government through both the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and International North Pacific Fisheries Commission support research to determine the continent of origin of chinook salmon taken in the Japanese landbased drift net and the foreign Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries, to improve the understanding of the impacts on Alaskan chinook salmon stock interceptions by the Japanese mothership fishery and foreign Bering Sea trawl fisheries.


Mick Szabo, Chairman
Board of Fisheries


Clement Tillion, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery
Management Council

Jim Duncan, Speaker of House
Alaska State Legislature

Jalmar Kerttula, President of
Senate
Alaska State Legislature

BACKGROUND: JAPANESE HIGH SEAS

SALMON INTERCEPTION ISSUE

MARCH 1981

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Support Building, Juneau, Alaska**

BACKGROUND: JAPANESE HIGH SEAS SALMON INTERCEPTION ISSUE

The renegotiation of INPFC resulted in a revised treaty that significantly changed the fishing patterns of the Japanese high seas mothership and land based fisheries. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the changed area and its comparison with what the mothership fishing area used to be. The Japanese are allowed to fish inside of our Fisheries Conservation Zone west of 175° East longitude during times when North American salmon are thought to be in low abundance. During the 1978, '79, and '80 seasons approximately two-thirds of the total mothership catch was taken while fishing in our zone, so the importance of this concession to their fishery is evident. In exchange for fishing in our zone the Japanese voluntarily agreed to restrict some of their activities outside of our zone, notably the land based gill net and mothership fisheries pulled back from 175° West to 175° East longitude south of our zone and the mothership fishery in the Central Bering Sea agreed to limit its effort to a level approximately one-half that experienced in the mid-1960's when Western Alaskan chinook interceptions in this area were unacceptably high.

The renegotiated treaty has had an extremely beneficial effect in terms of Western Alaska sockeye runs. The harvest of Western Alaska maturing sockeye has averaged only 111,000 fish for the last three years compared to about a 2 million average during the previous 22 years. In 1980, a peak year of the Bristol Bay cycle, only 180,000 maturing Bristol Bay sockeye were taken compared to 3.5 to 6 million taken in previous years of peak abundance. Immature harvest has remained the same at about 400,000 fish per year average. It was also felt that the overall reduction in fishing area, coupled with the effort limitations in the Central Bering Sea, would effectively limit their interceptions of Western Alaskan chinook. As you can see from Table 1, the relatively low harvest in 1978 and '79 seemed to support this.

The final Japanese high seas salmon mothership catch of chinook in 1980 was approximately 704,000 fish, the highest since the inception of the mothership fishery in 1952, and the second highest estimated interception of Western Alaska chinook. Unreported dead loss from the gill nets may amount to as much as one third of the total catch. The National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that some 388,000 of these were destined for Western Alaska. In the opinion of our State scientists the estimate of interception may be conservative. Be that as it may, the number is unacceptably high and in fact is higher than the average inshore harvest in Western Alaska by both our commercial and subsistence fishermen. These numbers in comparison with previous years' catches and inshore harvests are shown in Table 1 of the enclosures, which are intended to provide you with the necessary background on this fishery problem.

In 1980 the effort expended by the mothership fishery in the Central Bering Sea about doubled from the previous year, although it was still less than the treaty ceiling. Approximately 60 percent of their total chinook catch was taken out of the Central Bering Sea, and of the estimated interceptions 74 percent were taken in the Central Bering Sea.

This, however, is not the total picture regarding impacts on our stocks. Table 1 also shows groundfish trawl estimated interception of Western Alaskan chinook that has varied between 39,000 and 110,000 fish per year for the last four years. That would bring the total known interceptions to nearly half a million fish in 1980. Estimates of trawl interception for previous years do not exist. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has been wrestling with methods to reduce this trawl interception level and it should be an item of discussion at the forthcoming Council meeting in Anchorage in late March.

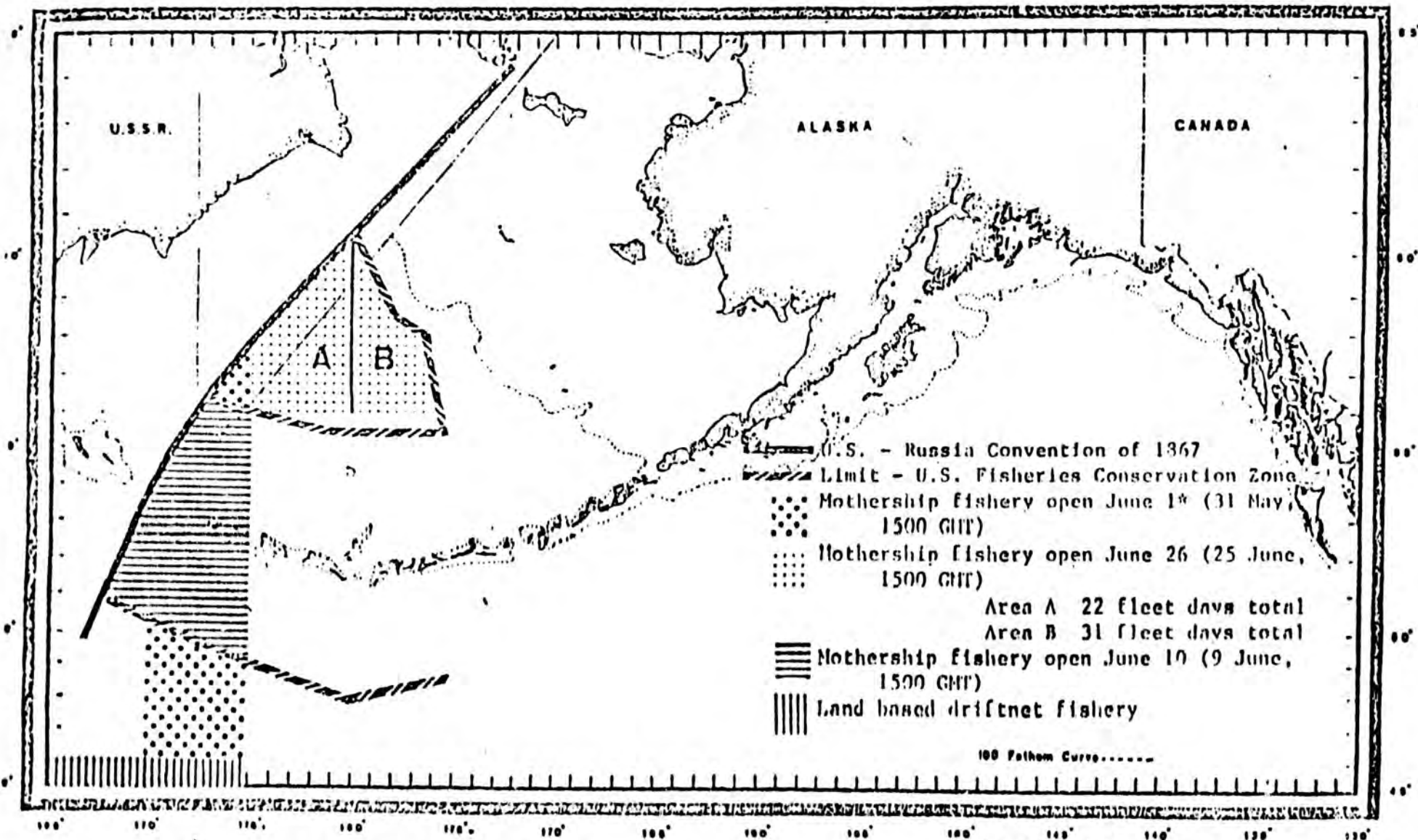
This is still not the total picture of potential impact on Western Alaskan chinook. Chinook salmon are also taken in the Japanese land based fishery to the south of the mothership fishery and in the Gulf of Alaska trawl fishery. Chinook salmon catches in the land based fishery

In recent years have varied from approximately 100,000 to 200,000 chinook, averaging somewhere around 160,000 chinook per year (Table 2). Estimates of Western Alaskan chinook present in the mothership fishery at its southernmost extremes still range around 30 percent, so it seems reasonable that the land based fishery just to the south of this must be taking some percentage of Western Alaskan chinook. We have no estimates for the proportion of Western Alaskan chinook in the Gulf trawl fishery. Another factor that has still not been considered is the unreported dead loss due to dropout from gill nets on the high seas. In the case of maturing sockeye salmon this was estimated to be as much as one third of the total catch. We have no corresponding estimates for chinook, but it may be substantial. In sum, then, it seems possible that half of the total harvest of Western Alaskan chinook may be taken on the high seas as immature fish one or two years away from their inshore migration and weighing less than one third of the total weight they would have had they reached inshore waters.

While we can identify to some degree the proportion of Western Alaskan chinook occurring in part of this harvest, we have no way to separate it by river systems or more discrete stocks which, of course, form the basis for our assessment and management inshore. All these inshore systems are managed based on stock abundance and are closely regulated by emergency order openings and closures by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Most of these fisheries have experienced extreme reductions in fishing time due to increases in inshore effort to preserve the necessary brood stock. Obviously, the high rate of exploitation on the high seas on mixed stocks as immatures greatly endangers our management of these runs, as well as being a major reallocation away from domestic fishermen.

A table is also enclosed giving the percent by species taken by the mothership fishery east of 180° in the Central Bering Sea and illustrating the relatively small part of their total quota taken in this area.

Figure 1.
JAPANESE HIGH SEAS SALMON FISHERY
 as governed by the
 International Convention for the High Seas
 Fisheries of the North Pacific Ocean
 (INPFC)



* All opening dates in Japanese Standard Time (GMT+9)

Prepared by:
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 Law Enforcement

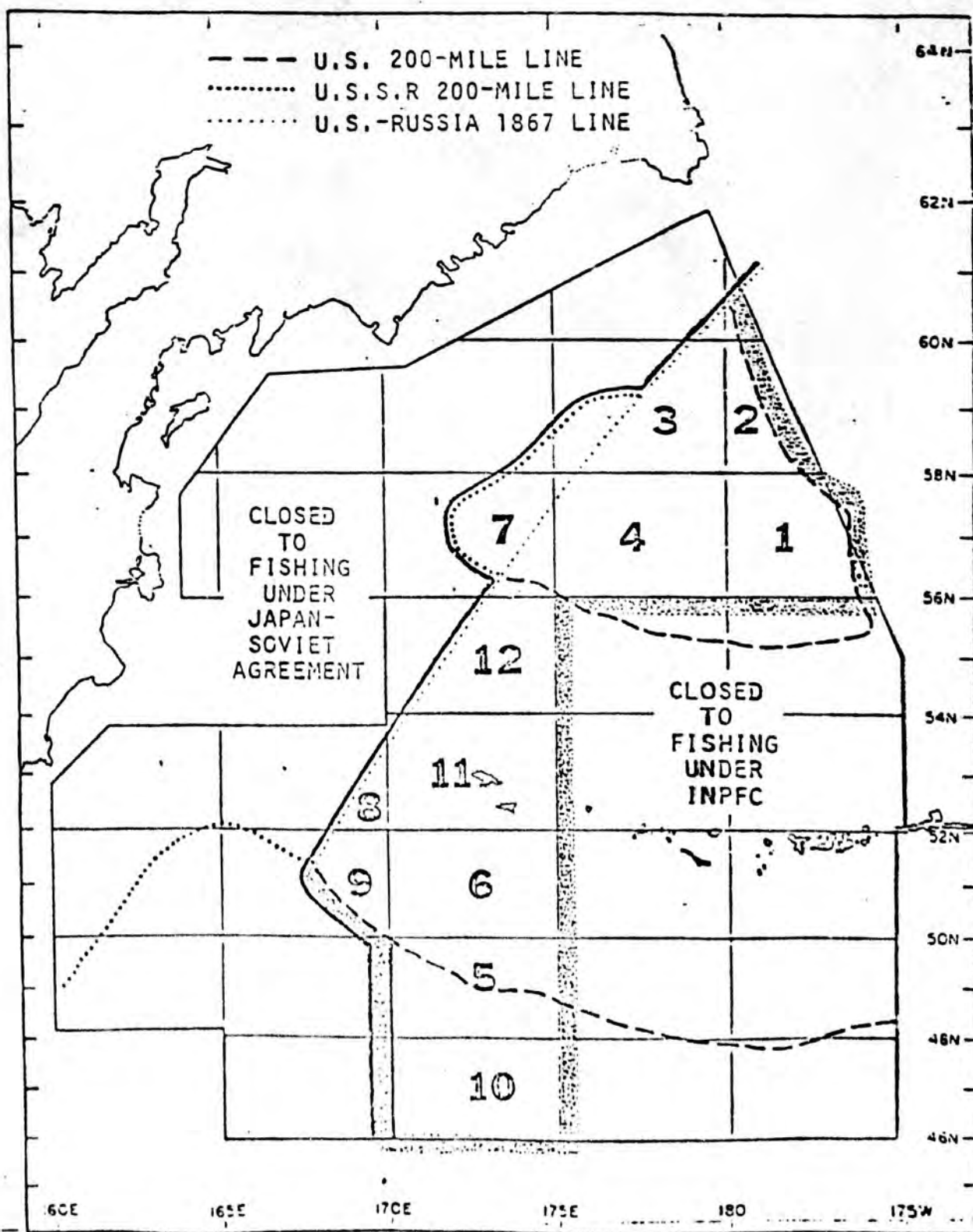


Figure 2. Post-1977 Japanese mothership salmon fishing area showing the rank order, from largest to smallest, of interceptions of western Alaska chinook salmon by 2° X 5° statistical area.

Table 1.
 Estimated total catch in thousands of western Alaska and Canadian Yukon chinook salmon by the Japanese mothership fishery, foreign groundfish fisheries, and U.S. commercial and subsistence fisheries.

Year	Mothership ^a	Ground- ^b fish	Sub- total	Western Alaska ^c		Sub- total	Total
				Commercial	Subsistence		
1956	55.4	-	-	132.7	-	-	-
1957	15.2	-	-	158.4	-	-	-
1958	5.4	-	-	181.9	-	-	-
1959	27.8	-	-	195.1	-	-	-
1960	135.0	-	-	195.7	-	-	-
1961	13.9	-	-	243.1	-	-	-
1962	29.7	-	-	213.1	-	-	-
1963	40.8	-	-	208.1	66.2	274.3	315.1
1964	252.9	-	-	260.0	50.5	310.5	563.4
1965	105.5	-	-	263.0	52.9	315.8	421.3
1966	111.5	-	-	207.5	69.5	277.0	388.5
1967	69.8	-	-	284.0	81.9	365.9	435.7
1968	226.3	-	-	259.0	54.2	313.2	539.5
1969	435.2	-	-	287.6	65.2	352.9	788.1
1970	344.8	-	-	290.8	95.1	386.0	730.8
1971	143.6	-	-	283.2	73.8	357.1	500.7
1972	169.5	-	-	224.1	66.7	290.8	460.3
1973	47.0	-	-	177.4	69.7	247.1	294.1
1974	286.8	-	-	180.2	57.3	237.6	524.4
1975	109.2	-	-	126.2	77.2	203.3	312.5
1976	167.7	-	-	241.5	84.0	325.6	493.3
1977 ^d	64.5	43.5	108.0	296.1	84.1	380.2	488.2
1978 ^d	31.3	39.1	70.4	380.0	74.6	454.6	525.0
1979 ^d	65.0	100.4	165.4	412.0	99.3	511.3	676.7
1980 ^d	388.0	110.0	498.0	312.0	90.0	402.0	900.0

a Doc. 2344, estimates do not include dropouts.

b Docs. 2121, 2210, 2336 (assuming 100% of the catch is of western Alaska and Canadian Yukon origin).

c Doc. 2351

d Preliminary estimates for western Alaska inshore catch and the 1980 mothership catch.

Table 2.
North Pacific-Bering Sea foreign chinook harvest potential impact on western Alaska stocks
in thousands of fish.

Year	Foreign Offshore		Western Alaska inshore total	Inshore			
	Total catch ^{1/2/}	Known interceptions ^{2/}		Misc.	Kuskokwim	Yukon	Bristol Bay
1965	278	106	316	8	55	135	118
1966	320	112	277	11	80	105	81
1967	238	70	366	9	91	145	121
1968	450	226	313	5	78	119	111
1969	637	435	353	6	109	105	133
1970	533	345	386	10	136	93	147
1971	340	144	357	12	90	127	128
1972	364	170	291	5	100	111	75
1973	281	47	247	4	93	99	51
1974	547	287	238	6	61	115	56
1975	297	109	203	4	79	91	39
1976	484	168	326	9	110	103	104
1977	313	108	380	9	117	115	139
1978	374	70	455	25	102	127	201
1979	427	165	511	18	110	160	213
1980	994	508 (.57) ^{3/}	402	24	88	183	107
<u>Average</u>							
65-70	410	216 (.39)	335				
71-75	366	151 (.36)	267				
76-80	518	204 (.33)	415				

1/ Landbased, mothership, Gulf and Bering Sea trawl. Trawl fishery catches prior to 1977 are not available.

2/ Deadloss due to dropout not included.

3/ Preliminary trawl catch estimate 120 thousand - Bering Sea incidental catch.

Table 3.
Japanese Mothership Salmon Catch by Species and Effort in the
Central Bering Sea East of 180° Longitude, 1978-80

	1978 Number (%)	1979 Number (%)	1980 Number (%)
Sockeye	4,000 (1)	67,000 (3.1)	46,000 (1.9)
Chum	25,000 (1)	396,000 (12.1)	380,000 (12.3)
Pink	24,000 (1.3)	215,000 (5.3)	114,000 (20.3)
Coho	0	0	0
Chinook	2,000 (1.9)	32,000 (25.4)	218,000 (30.1)
Effort (1,000 tans)	20,000	156,000	272,000

High Seas Salmon Quota
 Soviet - Japan Convention

1978-80

Mothership Quota	15,500 mt
Landbased Quota	20,600 mt
Japan Sea Quota	6,400 mt
Total	42,500